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BRITISH CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING TEXAS

XXII

EDITED BY EPHRAIM DOUGLASS ADAMS

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹

No. 26.

New York.

Augt 31. 1845

My Lord,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the United States Naval force in various parts of the World, extracted from the Government paper of the 26th Instant.² Intelligence from Texas to the 30th Ultimo reports the temporary Cantonment of an American force of 11 or 1200 Men on St Joseph's Island (which faces the Coast between the Mouths of the Aransas Stream and the "Nueces,") and from the various accounts I have seen in the prints of this Country I should judge that reinforcements to the extent of about 2,500 Men are now on their way to the same destination, but the whole strength could hardly be completely assembled in Western Texas before the 10th of next Month, at the earliest.

I presume that St Joseph's Island has been selected for the disembarkation of the troops in preference to Corpus Christi because the entrance at that Pass has the advantage of rather more water, than that at Corpus Christi, (about a degree further to the Westward) and probably also because the Coast at that point is rather nearer to San Antonio de Bexar, where I conclude it is intended to canton the troops and form the main depots, upon the ground of it's situation with respect to the main routes into the Country, and superior comparative healthiness. It should be said that there will be considerable inconvenience and difficulty in transporting the troops and Materiel rapidly from San Josephs to the Coast in consequence of the Shallowness of the Bay and the want of a sufficient number of light boats: And if the rains set in as early as September as they have done of

¹F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

²Cutting from *The Washington Union*, August 26, 1845.

late years, the March through the lower Country will be extremely slow and trying

If the Mexicans are advancing rapidly in force, and are accompanied by strong levies of effective and well mounted rancheros, thoroughly acquainted with the Country, and commanded by active partizan Chiefs, of whom there is no want in Mexico, the American force may find it more difficult to establish themselves firmly on their intended basis than appears to have been contemplated. In fact the inconsiderable amount of the force originally sent on, and the hurried and piecemeal manner in which reinforcements are now following strengthen me in the impression that the first movement in Texas was dictated chiefly by a desire to commit the Legislatures and people of the two Countries beyond any change of retraction, and not by apprehension of early irruption into Texas by Mexico.

Upon any other reasoning the manifest course, more particularly at this season of the year, would have been to assemble the expeditionary force at some convenient station in the Upper Mississippi, where it would have been beyond the range of yellow fever, and from which it could have been conveyed by Steam in a few days in complete strength and an effective condition to the most eligible place of disembarkation, nearest to the points which it was to act upon, or to cover. If there had not been any movement into the Country by the American Government till the Congress of the United States had met, I think there can be no doubt that Mexico would have been contented to wait for the final action of this Legislature, but other motives have been operative in this quarter and I am afraid that it may now be very difficult to avert a collision.

Amongst the impulses disposing the present Government of the United States to provoke hostilities with Mexico (and if hostilities do ensue it must be plain to the World that they have been incited by this Government both primarily and immediately,) would be the desire of a pretext for taking sudden possession of San Francisco Bay; and it is sincerely to be hoped that the Government of Mexico may lose no time in shaping their policy with respect to that part of their territory on large and sound principles.

But whatever the secret intentions, or political necessities or liabilities of this Government may be, as to the temper of Congress and the Country on more mature reflection, and better information than have hitherto obtained, it is certain at all events that the American force in advance has been exposed, in a Military point of view, to serious and perfectly avoidable risks:

And if the Mexican Warfare and policy are vigorously and judiciously managed, they have fairer means of disturbing the early aggressive proceedings of this Government than it was reasonable to suppose would have been given to them.

The outset of these operations has been defective, either as to the need for such haste with a handful of men, or the period at which they have been commenced, or the confused and desultory manner in which the force has been prepared and directed to the theatre on which it is to act, or finally as to the point of disembarkation.

Mexico in my judgment is in a better situation than could have been looked for, to fall at once and at advantage, upon schemes of warfare best suited to her strength and necessities, and to drop simultaneous suggestions of possible accommodation upon principles that will diminish the risk of vigorously protracted hostilities with the sanction of the Legislature of this Country; and without that sanction the Executive of the United State have neither the power nor the means to do much mischief to any other Country, or their own. Your Lordship will observe by the papers of this Country that the Governor of Louisiana has been called upon by the General Officer in Command of the S. W. division of the Army to reinforce the regular troops in Texas with drafts from the Militia of New Orleans.

They are unfitted for the circumstances and warfare which they would have to contend with in Texas, and will be a burden and an expense rather than of use in this struggle. The Militia best suited to such Service would be the hardy Yeomanry of the Western free States, not the unpractised youth of the Southern Cities, and I feel I hazard nothing in the prediction that if they are detached in force at this Season to the Coast of Texas, they will perish in great numbers, and with great rapidity. Neither can it fail to strike the most careless observer that with the reg-

ular force in advance, there is need for keeping the Militia at home, and prepared for Service, to guard against the contingency of negro movement, perfectly probable in the pursuit of a war with Mexico, undertaken mainly for the purpose of prolonging and extending the System of Slavery; a fact, of which it would be irrational to suppose that the Slave population of the United States is not quite aware.

Before I close this despatch I may add that it appears from the casual accounts I have seen in the papers, that a considerable portion of the force sent to Texas is Artillery with an unusually large number of Guns for so small an expedition.—So far as I have been able to judge of the weather and Country in Texas that arm would not be very effective in the warfare there except for a few Months in the year, owing to the dry state of the prairies and rush bottoms in the Autumn and Winter months; and if the war should be carried beyond the Rio Grande the inconvenience would be increased, by reason of the Mountainous nature of the Country, and the impossibility of using any other means of transport than Mules.

During the period of more than three years since my arrival in Texas, there have not been more than 10 Months in all, pending which Military operations could have been carried on in this Country, owing to deluges at one time, or drought and a want of fodder at another, and the utter impracticability of keeping a force in the field during the great stress of the heat.

With the view to afford the Commander in Chief all the means in my power of forming a judgment on the state of circumstances in Texas, I have taken the liberty of forwarding this despatch to him for his perusal.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable,

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN³

Private.

New York

August 31st 1845

My Lord,

Since I closed my despatch No 26 of this date (forwarded

³F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

through the Admiral) I have heard a report which I think it proper to mention to Your Lordship.

It comes to me from a Merchant of great respectability here, and directly to him from a person closely connected with Mexico, and he thinks, likely to be accurately informed.

My informant states his belief that letters of Marque have been for some time actually in Rio Janeiro, Havana, and other ports in various parts of the World, ready to be issued by the Mexican Consuls, as soon as they shall know of the commencement of hostilities between the United States and Mexico. I have no means of Judging of the truth of this statement, but Your Lordship will no doubt know what degree of credit should be attached to it. The Gentleman who mentioned the report to me thinks that an early rupture is inevitable, founding his opinion chiefly on the difficulty of restraining the American force in Western Texas.

Charles Elliot

To The Right Honourable

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN⁴

No. 23.

Her Majesty's Consulate

Galveston,

September 6th. 1845

My Lord,

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that the Convention assembled at Austin closed its deliberations and adjourned on Thursday the 28th Ultimo.

Enclosed herewith, are—a printed Copy of “the Constitution of the State of Texas,”⁵ adopted in the Convention, and a Copy of a Proclamation by President Jones—invoking the decision of the people of Texas, in reference to that Constitution, and “the expression of their opinions *for* and *against* Annexation,”—together with their adoption, or rejection, of an Ordinance passed by the Convention, having relation to Colonization Contracts.

It is to be observed that the final Vote respecting the State Constitution and the question of Annexation is to be declared

⁴F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

⁵The Constitution of 1845.

"*vica voce*."—In the elections of the Republic the Votes, hitherto, have been taken by *ballot*. The opponents of Annexation in Galveston appear to consider that (the open) Mode of arriving at the sentiments of the people, as unfavourable to the uncontrolled developement of opinion.

Appended to the printed copy of the "Constitution of the State of Texas," is an ordinance adverse to the existing Contracts for Colonization, and calculated, if not to invalidate them directly, so far to impede their operation as to render them useless to their holders—The interests to be affected by this Ordinance are, all but exclusively European.—The German Association, lately represented by the Prince of Solms, forwarded emigrants to Texas on the faith of one of these Contracts.

When General Murphy arrived at Galveston, as Chargé d' Affaires of the United States in June 1843; he instituted inquiries respecting the Colonization Contracts, and took occasion to denounce the introduction into Texas of Settlers from Europe.—He remarked that—"the inhabitants of Texas wanted emigrants like themselves, and no others—Men speaking their own language, and subject to their own customs and laws"

Mr Terrell—lately representing this Country in England—returned to Texas, in the Brig "Hope Howes," from New Orleans, on Tuesday the 2d Instant.—He appears desirous to correct misrepresentations that have been current of the course pursued by Great Britain in reference to Texan affairs, but Annexation being considered virtually settled, it is not likely that he will be afforded a suitable opportunity for explanation.—The number of those who would testify to that which is right, at the risk of detriment to their worldly hopes, or expectations, is not greater here than elsewhere, and the will of the people being Sovereign, the majority by which it is pronounced is by no means indulgent to openly-avowed dissent, or tolerant of active opposition.—Unceasing endeavours—which circumstances have aided, have been made to render the name of England a bugbear in this quarter, and the fruit of these endeavours will doubtless remain after the object which inspired them is accomplished.

For my own part, I am unable to perceive the advantages to be derived, by the present inhabitants of Texas, from the accom-

plishment of Annexation, as contrasted with the attainment of peace and independence.—Popular impulse,—(however generated) for the time bears down every suggestion of prudence and public spirit, but the day is not remote when the feverish Joy of the National “espousals” must yield to cold considerations of a State debt, without internal resources for its liquidation—of the litigation of Land Titles before an unfamiliar, and, practically foreign tribunal—and of a State revenue to be drawn from a source inadequate and unwilling—which has never yet supplied one third of the amount that will inevitably be required for the efficient working of the new Administrative machinery.

Since my despatch No 22 of the 23d Ultimo, small bodies of regular troops, and volunteers, with arms and stores, have been transported from the United States to Western Texas. Up to the date of the present communication, no intelligence on which reliance can be placed has, to my knowledge, been received at Galveston from Mexico. The last accounts from Corpus Christi represent Mexican traders as still resorting thither.

In my despatch No 10, of the 25th of April last, I mentioned that the “Texas National Register” (official Journal) had defended Mr Ashbel Smith against the charge of being unfriendly to Annexation. The “Galveston Civilian” of this day, contains a reply to the same charge from Mr Smith himself, of which I take leave to enclose a copy.—It’s author is still in the United States.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN⁶

No. 27.

New York.

My Lord,

September 13th 1845

I have thought it may be convenient to forward for Your Lordship’s perusal, the protest of Mr L. D. Evans, a Delegate in Convention from Fannin County (extracted from the Texian National Register of the 14th August) against the passage of the resolutions inviting the troops of the United States into Texas.

Without dwelling upon any particular measure of a Body, unconstitutionally assembled to sacrifice the separate existence, and

⁶F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

revolutionize the institutions of the country, Mr Evan's protest has certainly strengthened me in the belief that the movement of the United States troops beyond the Sabine was made mainly to commit the Legislatures and people of the two Countries beyond all possibility of retractation. But beyond that motive, I cannot but think, that the advance of the American force within the territory which the Government of Texas in the preliminary conditions sent on to Mexico palpably admitted to be subject to Negotiation and compromise, affords conclusive proof that the Government of the United States desired to provoke hostilities by Mexico; probably with the view to the sudden seizure of certain positions on the Coast of California. I avail myself on this occasion to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordships despatches to No 12 inclusive, and a Circular despatch of the 30th June.

To The Right Honourable

Charles Elliot

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN⁷

Private.

New York.

My Lord,

September 14th 1845

I have the honour to forward for Your Lordship's perusal a series of letters signed J. H. E. dated at Corpus Christi on the 8th, 13th, and 27th August which I have extracted from the New York Tribune of the 12th and 13th Inst

They appear to me to contain a good account of the Country in which the American force is now posted, and I think are otherwise very worthy of Your Lordship's notice. From a paragraph towards the close of the Communication No 1—I collect that it is not intended at present to maintain the positions West of the "Nueces," but I should add that my own private letters from Texas, and the tone of the Government press in this Country would lead to different inferences. I have also extracted the 3d Edition of the same paper of this day's date, containing the latest information which I have seen from the Expeditionary force. This letter is sent to the Admiral for his perusal

To the Right Honourable.

Charles Elliot.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

⁷F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

P. S.

New York. Sepr. 15.

By an American Brig arrived yesterday from Tobasco (sailed on the 20th Ulto) reports have reached this place of a revolutionary Movement in that quarter against the Mexican Authorities

ABERDEEN TO ELLIOT⁸

Consular

Foreign Office

No. 3.

September 17th 1845

Sir,

I have read with painful attention the explanations contained in your Despatch, Consular No 1 of 1st of July last, which, in compliance with the Instructions conveyed to you in my Despatch Consular No 1 of the 3d of June, you have given me on the subject of the Charges which you preferred against Her Majesty's Consul at Galveston.

As you have in part expressed concern at having made those Charges, and have in part withdrawn from the prosecution of them, I am unwilling to dwell further upon the subject of them, than to express my regret that you should have allowed yourself to have been led away by a momentary feeling of irritation into the serious error of bringing accusations against one of Her Majesty's Subjects, which were calculated so greatly to injure him in the estimation of Her Majesty's Government.

At the same time, however, I make allowances for the hastiness of the act, considering your infirm state of health, at the time at which it was committed, and I willingly acknowledge the candour with which you have admitted your error.

Aberdeen.

Captain Elliot.

Texas.

ABERDEEN TO ELLIOT⁹

No. 13.¹⁰

Foreign Office.

September 18th. 1845.

Sir,

I perceive by your Despatch No 23, of the 13th of August, enclosing your Correspondence with Her Majesty's Minister in

⁸F. O. Texas, Vol. 21.

⁹F. O. Texas, Vol. 21.

¹⁰F. O. Texas, 21, Aberdeen to Elliot, Nos. 11, July 18, and 12, August 4, 1845, have been omitted. Both acknowledged receipt of despatches.

Mexico on the subject of your departure from Texas, prior to the passing of the Act of Annexation to the United States, that you have somewhat misapprehended the drift of my Despatch No 10, of the 3d of July, with reference to your contingent continuation, or departure from Texas, while the question of annexation was still pending in that Country.

In the uncertain prospects under which that Despatch was written, it was impossible for me to give you fixed and definite instructions for the guidance of your conduct under every circumstance which might arise. Much was therefore necessarily left to your discretion. But you will find it pretty clearly intimated in the concluding part of that Despatch that Her Majesty's Government rather contemplated your remaining at your post until the Act of Annexation should have been passed. As, however, the preceding correspondence between yourself and this Office has left Her Majesty's Government in uncertainty as to whether, on the arrival of my Despatch of the 3rd of July, you might not have already quitted Texas, the alternative of your remaining in Texas, or in some part of the United States, until you should have received further instructions from home, was mentioned.

Her Majesty's Government would on the whole have preferred that you had remained at your post until the Annexation had been formally decided by the Government of Texas; but they are not disposed to blame you for not having done so, and are willing to admit that the reasoning by which you support the expediency of your departure is not without force, although they are inclined to take a different view of the matter, and are of opinion that your waiting passively the vote of Annexation, would in no way have compromised either Your Government or Yourself.

You will still continue to reside in some port of the United States until Her Majesty's Government shall have been able to see more clearly what turn Affairs may have taken, or may be likely to take, in Texas, and to instruct you accordingly.

Aberdeen.

Captain Elliot. R. N.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹¹

No. 28.

New York.

September 29th. 1845

My Lord,

Intelligence from Galveston to the 6th Instant reports the dissolution of the Assembly at Austin on the 28th Ultio.

The popular vote on the Constitution was to be taken viva voce, and should it appear by the returns to have been adopted, the President was to issue his proclamation on or before the 2d November next, for the election of the officers and representatives of the State Government, who however were not to enter upon their functions until after intelligence had been received of the acceptance of the Constitution by the Congress of the United States. I learn from private sources of information worthy of credit, that efforts were made to establish an ad interim Government at once, but other influences prevailed. The Constitution and authorities of the Republic will therefore continue in force till the Measure of Annexation is completed in this Country; Neither can I dismiss the impression that the Government of Mexico has it in it's power by very prompt and judicious proceedings, if not to defeat this plot, at all events to give it a shape and result that will materially mitigate it's mischievous consequences

My own papers from Texas have not yet reached me, but I have extracted from a Journal of this Country an ordinance submitted to the people with the Constitution of the State. I believe that it is mainly directed against a particular Colonization Contract between General Houston and certain Citizens of this Country, made in the early part of the year 1843, and alleged by his enemies to have been irregularly if not illegally completed. But the Measure may have a more general bearing, and affect interests which Her Majesty's Government would consider it right to protect. I have therefore submitted it for Your Lordship's notice.

The latest dates I have seen from Corpus Christi are of the 16th Instant. The American forces there consisted at that time of about 2,200 Men of all arms, but reinforcements to the extent

¹¹F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

of about 1500 more were looked for in the course of a few weeks. When the whole is assembled, I remark that at least a third of it will consist of Artillery.

It did not appear that General Taylor expected to be attacked, and nothing certain was known of the positions or extent of force of the Mexicans.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹²

No. 29.

New York.

Sep. 30. 1845.

My Lord,

The accompanying Newspaper¹³ containing a Schedule directing that the Constitution of the proposed State of Texas, as passed by the Body lately assembled at Austin, should be submitted to the people, has this morning reached me in time for the Mail of tomorrow from Boston.

It further contains a Copy of the President's proclamation, from the terms of which it will appear that he has also submitted the question of Annexation or Not to the popular vote; and it occurs to me that there is some ambiguity of expression as to whether that last question is to be taken viva voce, or otherwise.

Charles Elliot

To the Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹⁴

No. 30.

New York.

October 6th. 1845

My Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's despatch No 13.

I take the liberty to remind Your Lordship that I did remain in Texas till the 15th of June last, that is till the day

¹²F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

¹³*The Civilian and Galveston Gazette*, September 6, 1845.

¹⁴F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

before the Meeting of Congress when there could be no reasonable doubt that the Measure of Annexation would be formally adopted by that body and the Executive within a very brief period. The Measure was immediately adopted, and I believe that the ill success of the efforts to set aside the Government at once is chiefly to be attributed to my departure before they could be made.

My own view and intention has always been to return to New Orleans in the event of any change of temper or affairs in Texas indicating the advantage of my near neighborhood to that point, and I may perhaps be able to form some judgment in that respect when the result of the election for the 10th Congress are fully known. So far as they have yet been reported there is no ground for movement upon my part in that direction, but I should say at the same time that they do furnish some slight evidence of recovering strength in the Anti-Annexation party in particular sections of the Country; that is, if I may judge from a few of the names of the Elected Candidates.

Should any considerable portion of the new Congress in Texas be wisely and honourably disposed, and should there be the least pretext for retracing what has been done, in the course of the ensuing Congress in the United States, it is probable that the President of Texas will forthwith call a Session, and do what may be in his power to save the independence of the Country. Late though it be, I still lean to the opinion that it is in the power of Mexico to give a shape to these affairs which would effectually break up the present Scheme of Annexation in the United States, and defeat the other dangerous designs with which She is menaced from this quarter. If there should seem to be any necessity for my movement to New Orleans or Texas before I could receive Your Lordship's sanction, I should state my impressions to Mr. Pakenham, and guide myself by his opinions.

Charles Elliot

To the Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN¹⁵

No. 28.

Her Majesty's Consulate
Galveston

October 16th. 1845.

My Lord,

I have the honor to enclose a printed Copy¹⁶ of a Speech delivered by Mr. Terrell, lately representing the Government of Texas in England, to a party of political and personal friends by whom he was entertained at Galveston, on the 2d of this Month. Although (acting in conformity with a rule to which I have uniformly adhered since my residence at this Consulate) I was not present at the entertainment,—I am enabled to assure Your Lordship that the enclosed copy of Mr Terrell's Speech is deemed by that gentleman to be a faithful record of his sentiments. The party assembled on the occasion was small in number, but respectable; its paramount object was to afford Mr Terrell an opportunity for explanation. Of this opportunity—when time, and place, and circumstance are duly considered—it will be admitted that he availed himself with a considerable boldness.

There are but two passages in the Speech which seem to call for present remark: these I have marked: One, in page 2., adverting to the probable disposition of the Federal Union, in consequence of the extension of the territory of the United States;—the other, in page 3d., commenting upon the alleged design of Her Majesty's Government to effect the abolition of Negro Slavery in Texas.—With regard to the first of these passages, the apprehensions it embodies are entirely speculative, and with quite as little prospect of being realized now as at any previous time:—with regard to the second passage, Mr Terrell errs in attributing the excitement respecting Slavery in Texas to Your Lordship's remarks in the House of Lords,—spoken, if I mistake not, in August 1843.—The excitement had its origin in the town of Houston, in March 1843, and the leading facts in relation to it were submitted to Your Lordship in my Despatches of the Slave Trade Series for that year. It was immediately after England that the Southern States of the Union appeared to take

¹⁵F. O. Texas, 14.¹⁶Unidentified newspaper cutting. But see p. 395, Note 18.

the Movement of which Mr Andrews was the representative in alarm on the subject of Slavery in Texas, and that direct and strenuous endeavours were made by the American Executive to accomplish the Measure of Annexation as speedily as possible.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹⁷

No. 31.

New York.

November 14th 1845

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward to Your Lordship a Galveston Newspaper¹⁸ of the 18th Ultimo containing the report of a Speech delivered by Mr Terrell at a public dinner recently given to him by some leading Citizens of that place.

The respect which is so generally and justly felt for him in Texas will no doubt have great weight to his opinions on the subject of Annexation in point of policy and interest. And he has joined to those views what should be matter for serious reflection throughout the Country, in this honourable exposure of the misrepresentation and indirect proceedings by which the people were beguiled and precipitated into a shameful measure of National annihilation.

Indeed it is beginning to be generally understood by the people of Texas, though probably too late, that the demand for the entrance of the troops of the United States, and the foregone compliance of this Government, were not attributable to any well founded apprehension of Mexican invasion, but chiefly to surrender the Country forthwith into the Military possession of the Executive of the United States, for the purpose of overawing the friends of the independence of the Republic, and of silencing any inconvenient reconsideration of the subject in the Legislature of the United States. A state of actual war with Mexico would probably have that last effect; and a pretext for suddenly engaging the force in Texas in proceedings of still further aggression and invasion upon Mexico, rendering collision inevitable, could always be found at a short notice, in the event of any political

¹⁷F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

¹⁸*The Civilian and Galveston Gazette*, October 18, 1845.

pressure upon the administration here arising out of the renewed discussion of the principles and details of the present Scheme of Annexation, in the Congress of the United States.

The latest accounts from Galveston are of the 1st Instant, and at that date the general result of the popular vote on Annexation was not known, but it was sufficiently ascertained that there would be a large majority in favour of it. I remark, however, that the vote taken on the occasion at Galveston, did not amount to much more than half the whole vote of the County. The Annexation party polled what may be taken to be about their whole strength, 270, but the opponents of the measure refrained in a great degree from a viva voce vote which they probably felt in the present temper of the Country, would only unavailingly expose them to suspicion and ill-will. Their vote however reached 121. In Harris County in which Houston is situated, similar feelings seem to have prevailed. Upon the whole judging from the information I have received, I think there may be some ground for the opinion that the Anti-Annexation party is rather recovering strength, and if Congress in the United States should not fulfill the expectations raised in the Correspondence of Major Donnelson with the Government of Texas, it is possible that the reaction there will be stronger and more general than is anticipated in this quarter.

There is a respectable party in Texas cordially in favour of maintaining the Independence of the Republic, and some of the most influential persons in the Country are probably only waiting for a favourable opportunity, and some turn of the popular tide, to head the movement. At my last dates, the United States force in Texas consisted of about 4,000 troops, and there had been no change in their position.

The continuance of the illicit traffic on that frontier, notwithstanding the presence of the force, strengthens me in an impression I have for some time entertained that it would be a wise and safe policy for Mexico at the present conjuncture, to declare the Brassos San Jago a free port for the vessels of all friendly Nations, admitting goods there on an ad valorem duty, not exceeding 5 per Cent. If that Measure were accomplished by a rigid enforcement of the prohibitions against the entrance of

goods by the land frontier, I think the land traffic would soon be beat down by the safety and superior cheapness of the other channel. No better mode of checking some of the very dangerous purposes of this Government against Mexico has presented itself to my mind, and I am sure that it consists with the security of Mexico to fall forthwith upon sound means of diminishing the Commercial intercourse with the Americans by the land frontier. The present purpose of this Government is to make Texas the emporium of a great smuggling trade into the Northern Provinces of Mexico, but I believe it is more in the power of Mexico, by judicious courses, to make Matamoros an emporium for an extensive trade with the United States.

If goods can be purchased much cheaper at Matamoros than at New Orleans (or Galveston, as part of the United States) the people in Texas will purchase them there, and they will find their way by that channel through the whole South West of the United States. The Mexicans have but to beat the Americans in a liberal Commercial policy, at their frontier ports, (no hard task,) and the trafficking spirit of the Neighbouring people will effectually secure to them the fruits of their victory.

I take this occasion to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's despatches No. 14 and 15.

Charles Elliot

To the Right Honourable

The Earl of Aberdeen K. T.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN¹⁹

Secret.

New York.

November 26th. 1845.

My Lord,

Since I last had the honour of addressing Your Lordship I have received some information from a quarter where mistakes are not likely, which Her Majesty's Government may desire to know.

The substance of it is that the Executive of the United States is fully committed to the expectations raised by Major Donnellson's correspondence with the Government of Texas, especially as to provision for their debt in some satisfactory form, or the

¹⁹F. O. Texas, Vol. 13.

security to Texas of the whole of their legislative territorial pretensions. It seems that Major Donnelson found it necessary to address a letter to this effect to two leading Members of the late Convention at Austin (whose names are known to me) to secure their support. And I think Your Lordship may depend that Mr Polk has subsequently authorized the Agents of Texas at Washington to communicate to their Government his unreserved adoption of Major Donnelson's pledges, and his determination to use all the influence of the Administration to give them full effect.

According to my information it is probable that the President will confine himself in his opening Message to a recommendation of the immediate acceptance of the State Constitution, leaving all the other details, (for fear of embarrassment) to be the subject of a separate Communication, as soon as the main part is carried. I am further informed that one idea of the Government of the United States was to propose to Mexico that the Northern and Western limits of the new State should remain as they are legislatively claimed by the Republic of Texas till the descending line of the Rio Grande reaches the Presidio del Rio Grande (a point noted on Arrowsmith's Map,) and thence, that the lower river and all the Country South and East of the Presidio, as far as the "Nueces" shall be restored to Mexico, the harbour, however of Brassos Santiago, to be ceded to the United States, and the navigation of the river to be common. A further scheme appears to be that the whole Country between the Rio Grande and the Pacific, North of the parallel 36°. 30". should be purchased of Mexico, and it is the impression of the party by whom I was informed, that no arrangement would be satisfactory to this Government, and a large party in the Legislation of the United States that did not involve the acquisition of San Francisco Bay.

Whether this information is entirely accurate, or to what extent it is, I cannot undertake to say; but it reaches me from such a source that I have considered it right to communicate it to Your Lordship, as well as privately to Her Majesty's Ministers at Washington and Mexico. It is to be hoped that the Government of Mexico, (taking warning by the past, and heedful of the palpable purposes of this Government, and of the people of

the growing parts of this Country) will, before it is too late, shape their future policy by a steady regard to the strength and security of the Country in their actual possession, or which they can effectually defend. And if the Government of Mexico will conduct their negotiations with the United States upon these principles, skilfully and temperately, availing themselves of the Sectional jealousies in this quarter, and avoiding any agreement upon the Texas question unless the menaced difficulties in California can be simultaneously and satisfactorily adjusted, I believe that they may lay the foundations of a better balance of political power on this Continent, involving more of security to themselves and all the kindred races, South of them, than there appears to be otherwise much reason to hope for.

Charles Elliot.

To The Right Honourable.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

ABERDEEN TO ELLIOT²⁰

No. 16.²¹

Foreign Office.

December 3. 1845.

Sir,

Your Despatch No. 30 of the 6th of October last, has been received and laid before the Queen.

Until the final Annexation of Texas to the United States shall have taken place, Her Majesty's Government consider it indispensable that you should be at your post at the Seat of Government in Texas, in order to maintain the Communications between the two Governments, and to keep Her Majesty's Government regularly and authentically informed of all that takes place in Texas.

I have therefore to desire that you will forthwith repair to your post, and that you will remain there until you receive orders from Her Majesty's Government to leave it.

Aberdeen.

Captain Elliot, R. N.

²⁰F. O. Texas, Vol. 21.

²¹F. O. Texas, 21, Aberdeens to Elliot, Nos. 14, October 3 and 15, October 18, 1845, have been omitted. Both acknowledged receipt of despatches. Aberdeen to Elliot, No. 17, December 3, 1845, notifying Texas that Great Britain will still hold her to her treaty obligations, is in Garrison, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, III, 1203, in Am. Hist. Assoc. Report, 1908, II.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN²²

No 34.

Her Majesty's Consulate
Galveston

December 8th. 1845.

My Lord,

In my Despatch No 7., of the 2d of April last, mention was made of certain Military operations contemplated by Doctor Branch T. Archer, formerly Secty of War in Texas, and others. Since that period, Doctor Archer, and the partner of his counsels, General Thos. J. Green,²³ who formed one of the Texian expedition beyond the Rio Grande, in 1842, has spent the greater part of their time in Washington, United States, where they appear to have been favourably noticed by the President, and the leading Members of his Cabinet.

Mr Terrell's Speech at Galveston, of which I had the honor to enclose a Copy to Your Lordship, in Despatch No 28, of October 16th, has not been published in any Texan Newspaper save that in which it originally appeared. Nor, so far as my information extends, has it been transferred to the columns of any Journal in the United States. The only notice I have seen of it, East of the Sabine, is contained in a Whig Newspaper, the "New York Courier and Enquirer," which taunts the official Journal at Washington with its silence touching the grave charges advanced by Mr Terrell against the Government of the United States.

Since my Despatch of the 16th, no event of importance has occurred here. In addition to the encampment at Corpus Christi, small bodies of United States troops have been stationed at Austin, Goliad and San Antonio, all of which places are on the Western frontier. The establishment of the force at Corpus Christi was effected slowly, and at a great expense, and an active enemy might have found it no difficult matter to cut off the troops as fast as they landed. The want of good water, with

²²F. O. Texas, Vol. 14.

²³Thomas Jefferson Green, b. 1801, d. 1863. A native of North Carolina, he early in life removed to Texas, and was brigadier-general of volunteers in the War of Texan Independence. In 1842, he led the disastrous Mier expedition, was captured, and not released until September, 1844. He published "The Mier Expedition" (1845). (Appleton, *Cyclop. of Am. Biography*.)

other local causes, has produced much sickness in the Corpus Christi encampment. It appears to me that if war were to be conducted with the same absence of System and prodigality of outlay that have characterized this frontier occupation, a great European Power, having the command of the Gulf, could carry on a campaign in Texas more efficiently and less expensively than the United States—provided always, that the European Power would take the trouble to ascertain what really are the strong and the weak points of American organization. This, experience shows, the pride of an old Sovereignty will hardly permit it to do.

Some artillery and small arms have been landed at Galveston, but the Island remains without regular troops, or defences. This would seem to be a singular oversight, if hostilities have been anticipated; as Galveston is the Key of the Country, and presents peculiar advantages for the establishment of a large force,—covered and supplied by a fleet in the Gulf.

Annexation having opened a new career to Texan politicians, each party pretending to popular favour and office has been endeavouring to prove itself entitled to the credit of having carried the Measure. The first movement in this direction is ascribed to General Houston, who, in a speech made at New Orleans, on the 28th of May last, is represented to have said that he was the friend of Annexation, although he has “coquetted a little with Great Britain.”

General Houston returned from the United States to Texas in October, and, on the 12th ultimo, attended a Public Dinner given to him at Galveston. This Dinner I was invited to attend, but declined the invitation, for reasons of obvious propriety. Mr Ashbel Smith and the Mayor of Galveston severally called upon me, from General Houston, conveying from him expressions of regard, and of the pleasure he would feel in meeting me. My reply was that I had personally no grounds for ill will to General Houston, but that a sense of what was done [d] to the Commission which I held, must deprive me of the pleasure of Meeting him, so long as the statement contained in the report of his New Orleans Speech—that he had “coquetted” with Great Britain,—remained uncontradicted. It being authoritatively denied that General Houston had made the remark, I suggested

that the contradiction, to be of value, should be as public as the report. A public address subsequently delivered by General Houston, afforded a suitable opportunity for any explanation he might deem befitting, but the occasion passed without any reference to the New Orleans Speech;—and there the Matter rests.

The controversy as to who carried, or was most earnest in the endeavour to carry, the Measure of Annexation, has induced the publication of various official and non official documents of which I beg leave to enclose the more interesting: namely,²⁴

1st Letter of Instructions from the Secty of State of Texas to the Texan Charge d' Affaires to the United States, dated January 20th 1842.

2d. A similar letter, from the Secry of State of Texas, to the Texan Charge d' Affaires to the United States, dated February 10th 1843

3d Secret Message of President Houston to the Texan Congress, dated Jany. 20th 1844.

4th. Letter of President Houston (Confidential) to the Texan Chargé d' Affaires at Washington, U. S., dated January 29th and February 15th 1844

5th Letter (Strictly confidential) from President Houston to General Murphy, U. S. Charge d' Affaires in Texas. dated February 3d. 1844.

6th Ex. President Houston's letter to Certain Citizens of Washington (Texas) dated October 20th. 1845.

7th Ex-President Lamar's letter to Citizens of Galveston, dated November 15th 1845

I also enclose herewith a printed Copy of a Proclamation by President Jones, announcing the result of the appeal to the people in regard to the ratification, or rejection, of the State Constitution, and a printed copy of a Proclamation naming a day for holding the elections under that Constitution.

²⁴Newspaper cuttings without date or name. Numbers 1, 4, and 5 are calendered by Garrison as in the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, November 26, 1845. No. 2 is in Garrison, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, II, 123, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1908, II. No. 3 is in *Secret Journals of the Senate*, 294-296. Nos. 8 and 9 (as well as Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 5), were later transmitted by Elliot also (*F. O. Texas*, 16, Elliot to Aberdeen, No. 7, January 20, 1846) and were stated to have appeared in the "National Register Newspaper of the 29th November last." . . .

There are three candidates for the representation of Texas in the Senate of the United States—General Lamar, Houston and Rusk: it is supposed that Houston and Rusk will be elected.

A considerable number of German emigrants have arrived this season. I propose to transmit a return of the whole number to the close of the present year.

William Kennedy

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.